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Press Release # 5

Outbreak of Rift Valley Fever

The Directorate of Veterinary Services would like to update the farming community and the general public with regards to the latest developments concerning the Rift Valley Fever outbreak.

Following the determination that the outbreak is restricted and isolated to a few farms the Directorate and after consultation with the South African Veterinary authorities, wishes to announce that a number of restrictions have now been lifted and are explained in the next paragraphs.

1. The Directorate Animal Health of South Africa will allow the importation (into South Africa) the following commodities:

- **Live Ruminants**

  Live ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats and game) into South Africa under a **RSA veterinary import permit** and **health certificate** processed by a the Directorate of Veterinary Services of Namibia provided that:

  i. The animals did not transit through a Rift Valley Fever infected zone during transportation.
  ii. The animals originate from an area that is not within a 5km radius of any farms

under restriction for Rift Valley Fever.

iii. Cattle, sheep and goats to be exported to South Africa through Botswana are still required to be vaccinated against Rift Valley Fever 21 days prior to movement.

iv. In view of iii) above, all unvaccinated livestock and game can only be exported through designated border posts between Namibia and South Africa (Ariamsvlei and Noordoewer) until further notice.

- **Meat and Biltong**

i. Meat from the Foot and Mouth Disease free zone can now be exported without the need for maturation of the meat.

ii. Venison that is hunted for own use/consumption shall be subject to a health certificate attesting that the animals from which the meat is derived were not hunted in an area under restrictions for Rift Valley Fever.

iii. The quantities of break dry biltong or dröe wors that may be exported to South Africa for own use or own consumption has temporarily been increased to 200kg. However, this is subject to a South African veterinary import permit and a health certificate issued by the Directorate of Veterinary Services of Namibia. People who were issued with veterinary permits for 200kg of biltong must request a written dispensation from the South African veterinary permit office in Pretoria, should they wish to import venison also.

2. The Directorate of Veterinary Services (Namibia) will allow the importation of the following commodities

i. Breeding animals from South Africa 21 days after vaccination against RVF if accompanied by a Veterinary Import Permit and Health Certificate issued by the Directorate of Veterinary Services.

ii. A maximum of 25 kg of meat per passenger vehicle can be imported into Namibia without an import permit or health certificate.

3. Movement of Livestock within Namibia

i. Movement of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, camels and game) within the country is now permitted subject to a movement permit issued by the Directorate of Veterinary Services, except from farms that are under restriction for Rift Valley Fever or other reasons.

ii. Farms under movement restriction due to Rift Valley Fever will be allowed to move livestock 21 days after vaccination. No live game animal will be allowed to be moved from the restricted farms

4. Vaccination

The Directorate of Veterinary Services predicts that there is an increased risk of a Rift Valley Fever epidemic in the coming rain season and all livestock (cattle, sheep and goats) in the Hardap and Karas regions must be vaccinated before the onset on the rains. In this regard, DVS will announce shortly measures to be followed with regards to vaccination.

i. Transporters intending to move animals through Botswana are expected to vaccinate their livestock with an attenuated live vaccine at least 21 days prior to movement. Prior arrangements with the local state veterinary office must be made to avoid problems.

ii. In the mean time farmers who have vaccinated or would like to vaccinate their livestock must inform their State Veterinarian 3 working days prior to vaccination, provide proof of purchase of vaccine and empty vaccine containers and;

- In the case of cattle, they shall provide a list of ear-tags numbers and brand marks of vaccinated animals as well as date of inoculation.
- In the case of small stock, all small stock (except pregnant females) on the property shall be vaccinated; and the date of vaccination, the number vaccinated and the brand mark of the animals vaccinated shall be notified to the state veterinarian. Oil paint shall be used to mark all vaccinated small stock. After inoculation, only vaccinated small stock (with proof of vaccination) may be introduced into the farm. The exemption for pregnant females will be removed once the inactivated Rift Valley Fever vaccine is available on the market.

The lifting of these restrictions is by no means permanent and new measures and information will be released as it becomes available.

5. Personal Protection

The Directorate of Veterinary Services wishes to reiterate that Rift Valley Fever can infect and cause illness in humans particularly those who come into close contact with sick animals, aborted fetuses, blood and other body fluids especially during handling, slaughtering, butchering and milking. It is advised to wear rubber gloves and face masks when carrying such activities where the disease is suspected to be present and to exercise stringent hygiene such as thorough washing of hands with soap and water, disinfecting contaminated clothing and equipment. Please note that meat intended for human consumption (from healthy animals) must be chilled and matured at +2°C for a minimum period of 24 hours which will inactivate the virus if present. The disease can also be transmitted to humans by mosquitoes and biting flies.

Once again the Directorate of Veterinary Services wishes to thank the role players in the livestock industry for their understanding and collaboration in dealing with the issue of Rift Valley Fever.

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